

REMARKS

The present application was filed on April 16, 2004 with claims 1 through 20. Claims 1 through 20 are presently pending in the above-identified patent application. Independent claims 1, 6, 9 and 14 are proposed to be amended herein and claims 21-24 are proposed to be added.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hill (United States Patent No. 6,798,781). Claims 5, 13 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent Claims 1, 6, 9 and 14

Independent claims 1, 6, 9 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hill. With respect to claims 1, 6 and 14, for example, the Examiner asserts that Hill discloses synchronizing a transmission and reception of a message such that a message sent in a transmitting time-slot k by a node N_i is received by a node N_j in a receiving time-slot k , wherein the synchronizing step is performed by the hub node.

Each independent claim has been amended to emphasize that the synchronizing is performed by the hub node *using* a “delay from said node N_i to said hub node to determine said transmitting time-slot k .” Support for this amendment can be found, for example, in the original application at page 8, line 24, to page 9, line 7.

Applicants submit that this feature is not shown or suggested by Hill. While the hub node (controller) of Hill determines an allocation of timeslots and wavelengths (col. 3, lines 39-47), there is no disclosure or suggestion that it is based on any delay.

Applicants submit that Hill does not disclose or suggest synchronizing by the hub node *using* a “delay from said node N_i to said hub node to determine said transmitting time-slot k ,” as required by each independent claim, as amended.

Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1, 6, 9 and 14.

Dependent Claims

Claims 4-5, 11-13 and 16-20 are dependent on independent claims 1, 9 and 14, and are therefore patentably distinguished over Lahat, Kalkunte et al., Soderberg et al. and Tomioka, alone or in any combination, because of their dependency from independent claims 1, 9 and 14 for the reasons set forth above, as well as other elements these claims add in combination to their base claim.

New dependent claims 21-24 have been added to more particularly point out and distinctly claim various features of the invention, consistent with the scope of the originally filed specification, in order to give applicants the protection to which they are entitled. No new matter is introduced. See, e.g., page 3, lines 24-25. Claims 21-24 are dependent on independent claims 1, 6, 9 or 14, respectively, and are therefore patentably distinguished over Hill because of their dependency from independent claims 1, 6, 9 or 14 for the reasons set forth above, as well as other elements this claim adds in combination to its base claim.

Allowance of claims 21-24 are believed to be warranted.

Conclusion

All of the pending claims following entry of the amendments are in condition for allowance and such favorable action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner has already indicated that Claims 5, 13 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

If any outstanding issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions for expediting allowance of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Examiner's attention to this matter is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



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